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## GOVERNOR BARBOUR SEEKS DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MASTER PLAN FOR CAPITOL COMPLEX

Governor's Office to return to Sillers Building next year

(Jackson, Mississippi) – The Mississippi Governor's office and two major executive branch departments will return to the Sillers Building when renovations are completed next summer, Governor Haley Barbour announced today.

Governor Barbour said he had discussed the history of the Sillers Building, a High Street landmark, with former governors who said it was originally intended as the most appropriate building in the Capitol complex for housing the Governor's office and staff, and some key agencies. He said he was accepting the recommendation of these former governors to move the governor's office and staff, along with the Mississippi Development Authority and Department of Finance and Administration, back to Sillers. The offices have operated from the Woolfolk Building since **2000**; renovations at Sillers have been under way since **2001** and are expected to be completed by July 2006.

At the same time, Governor Barbour said he has directed DFA to take immediate action to develop a new master plan for the Capitol complex that analyzes the needs – especially parking and convenience – of constituents who obtain services from state agencies, and state employees. A master plan was completed in 1995 but never adopted by the Legislature, despite work in subsequent legislative sessions.

“Much has changed in recent months and it is time for a new master plan to be developed. There are many issues that need serious consideration as we look to the future for state government facility needs,” he said.

For example, within the past year the state has taken ownership of the former MCI headquarters building on Amite Street in downtown Jackson, along with some unimproved adjacent property and other properties within close proximity. DFA has also recently taken back responsibility for the 26 acres and facilities commonly referred to as the Old Farmers Market.

In addition, two state agencies, the State Tax Commission and the Department of Environmental Quality, are leasing private office space that is not situated in the best locations to provide proper accessibility to the public, and both of these agencies are visited heavily by the public on a daily basis, Governor Barbour said. And, some

state buildings are past due for major repair and renovation, specifically the Robert E. Lee Building and the Robert G. Clark Building.

“All of these issues make it clear that we must give priority to developing a current master plan that meets facility and parking needs for state agencies within the Capitol complex,” Governor Barbour said.

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